

25
CONVERSATIONS UNLIMITED - Monday, July 22, 1985

INTRO UP AND UNDER

Hi, everybody. I'm going to read a few headlines from recent newspapers. The first says: "Gautemala -- Disappearing into Terror." Here's another: "U.S. House Adds Loopholes on Nicaragua." And a third: "We Will Win, Top Salvador Rebel Says." The subject of these stories is, of course, Central America. One of the major concerns of many Americans is the role of the United States in the affairs taking place in Central American countries. We'll be talking about those affairs, and U.S. roles, with two guests today.

Steven Paysen is the Roman Catholic chaplain at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. For reasons we'll soon discuss, Catholic clergy, religious and lay people have been closely associated with recent events in Latin America. Also with us is Dr. John Strong, professor of history at the Southampton campus of Long Island University. Dr. Strong was in Nicaragua last January as a volunteer and, like Mr. Paysen, is active in the Central American Peace Alliance. Dr. Strong, perhaps we should begin in an academic way by defining the region we mean when we talk about Central America. We don't mean Mexico, and we don't mean South America, do we.

Mr. Paysen, I referred a moment ago to the Roman Catholic Church's special identity in Central America these past few years. Why is that region of special interest to the Church and, for that matter, to you, personally as a Catholic?

INTERVIEW PAYSAN AND STRONG:

-- How to tell the good guys from the bad guys in:

* El Salvador

* Gautemala

* Nicaragua

-- Concept of "Banana Republic"

-- Hemispheric parochialism

--- MORE ---

14:00

We'll continue our discussion of Central America, and take a closer look at the United States' role there, in a moment. Please stay with us.

BRIDGE MUSIC UP AND UNDER

Hi. I'm Al Oickle, and I'm at the State University of New York at Stony Brook with Steven Paysen and John Strong discussing Central America. We've touched a bit on the role of the United States in Central America but let's probe a bit deeper. Dr. Strong, does being bigger give the United States more responsibilities --- and more rights --- in the Western Hemisphere?

INTERVIEW DR. STRONG on U.S. role

Mr. Paysen, the Roman Catholic Church has been closely identified with some of the Central American activities, as we have noted already. Especially El Salvador. Let's talk a bit about that. It's my impression that the Church, while prominent in Vietnam, did not play a major role there during the civil war that involved first the French and then the U.S. and other Western allies. Why is the Church now so concerned about a tiny country like El Salvador?

INTERVIEW MR. PAYSSEN on Catholic Church's role

GENERAL INTERVIEW:

- Foreign influences: US, USSR, UN
- Foreign dependencies
- Central America as part of Third World's emerging international authority

29:00

OUTRO